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# PROJECT VALOR

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Project VALOR is grateful to Alex Rosa of Al-Ro Arts for the design of the cover and to Sal Ceballos from Senator Bingaman's Office for the many hours of support and encouragement.

Financial support provided by the Hispanic Leadership Program

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# PHILOSOPHY

**The Project VALOR Task Force believes in the potential for academic success that each student possesses; that such success can be ensured by maximizing opportunities through the networking of family, school and community services; and, that such services must recognize and reinforce the ethnic and cultural strengths which each student possesses.**

**Hereafter, the Project VALOR Task Force embraces the phrase “valued youth” in referring to those students previously termed “at risk”.**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the first report to be generated by a community based group in Doña Ana County which specifically addresses the Hispanic "dropout" issue. It is the result of the efforts of Project VALOR: the Hispanic Dropout Project, Doña Ana County. Comprised of a core group of members, Project VALOR has been meeting since February, 1995, when Senator Jeff Bingaman encouraged community members to come forward and develop **recommendations that could be taken at all levels in order to reduce the "dropout" rate of Hispanic youth.**

As a result, the **focus of Project VALOR is to find solutions to the problem and to build upon the many strengths which exist in Doña Ana County (DAC)**. Project VALOR believes in the potential for academic success that each student possesses; that such success can be ensured by maximizing opportunities through the networking of family, school and community services; and, that such services must recognize and reinforce the ethnic and cultural strengths which each student possesses. From this, **the ultimate goal is to improve the educational outcomes for all children and youth in DAC. By making education more effective for Hispanics, it will be more effective for all students and as a result, the quality of life for everyone in our community will improve.**

This report marks the completion of Phase I for Project VALOR. To get to this point, members have examined local, state, and national "dropout" statistics and prevention and intervention programs. Local school and community based programs have been inventoried to determine what programs are already in place. Teachers, administrators, parents, students and others have provided input in this process. The recommendations which have been formulated as a result of these efforts reflect a cooperative approach toward improving education in Doña Ana County. An **Action Plan for Phase II** which begins in May, 1996, is also included with a calendar which highlights planned activities. This report sets the

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foundation for the work which needs to be continued well into the 21st century.

## **I. INTRODUCTION - PROJECT VALOR**

### **A) HISTORY AND MEMBERSHIP**

Senator Bingaman, reacting to the alarming conclusions of studies showing that at least one-third of all Hispanic students entering seventh grade will never graduate from high school, requested President Clinton to form a national task force to look into this matter.

Community members concerned about the increasing Hispanic “dropout” rate have come together to find solutions.

This was particularly alarming to the Senator because Hispanics are the fastest growing segment of the population in New Mexico. According to the 1990 census this group now makes up approximately 41.5% of the population in southern New Mexico and over 56% in Doña Ana County. It is estimated that the 1990 census undercounts Hispanics by 2 - 7%, thereby the actual percentage is probably higher. Projections

show that by the next census count this percentage will increase to 42% in the state as a whole, with higher growth in southern New Mexico.

Project VALOR utilizes the Hispanic label in order to remain consistent with the National Hispanic Dropout Project and to include all persons of Latin American descent. In addition, this term is widely used by the Census Bureau. Data from the 1990 census illustrate that the Hispanic population in Doña Ana County is 90% of Mexican origin. It is important to note that Hispanics of Mexican origin are a very heterogeneous group as are all Hispanics and as individuals prefer to identify themselves in many different ways.

Because of the high Hispanic student population and high "dropout" rate in Doña Ana County, Senator Bingaman requested community members to form a local task force to compile existing information about the Hispanic "dropout" rate as well as

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programs that address the "dropout" issue. Based on its findings, the local task force was also asked to **make recommendations for actions that could be taken at all levels in order to reduce the "dropout" rate of Hispanic youth**. This report is a result of the efforts of the local task force and is intended to be the beginning of a long process. **The focus of the task force is to find solutions to the problem and to build upon the many strengths which exist in Doña Ana County.**

A call for membership for this local group was initiated by Senator Bingaman in early 1995. A notice was published in the local press several times in order to encourage involvement from concerned community members. As a result, meetings began in February, 1995 and have continued regularly to the present. The group has evolved since early 1995 and at times has divided into smaller working committees to expedite the information review process. Input has been obtained from youth,

teachers, business representatives, and school administrators from throughout the county. Reports from other regions in New Mexico as well as the nation have been examined in the information review process. "Dropout" and census statistics have been obtained from a variety of sources which are listed under the charts and tables and in the bibliography. Collecting an inventory of school and community based programs has been an ongoing process.

Although Senator Bingaman prompted the formation of the local group and has provided staff support, Project VALOR has taken on a life of its own. It is comprised of a broad base of individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds (APPENDIX A). It includes the public as well as private sectors and a wide variety of ages. The dialogue process which now exists between community members, the schools, and community based agencies must continue in order for our efforts to be successful.

## B) GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

PHASE I	STATUS
1) Involve a broad sector of the community in the project	<i>Completed</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ advertise in the local press</li> <li>◆ receive staff support by Senator Bingaman's office in recruitment and retention efforts</li> </ul>	
2) Foster cooperation and problem solving among a diverse group of community members	<i>Ongoing</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ encourage full participation from all members</li> <li>◆ create an environment for honest dialogue</li> </ul>	
3) Increase public awareness about the issue through education and information	<i>Ongoing</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ submit information to the local media</li> <li>◆ conduct a statewide information campaign in conjunction with the release of Phase I Report</li> </ul>	
4) Develop recommendations by May, 1996	<i>Completed</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ compile existing data and information about the issue</li> <li>◆ compile information about local school and community based programs in Doña Ana County</li> </ul>	
5) Establish an <b>Action Plan</b> for Phase II - May, 1996 through January, 1997	<i>Ongoing</i>

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| ◆ determine activities and a time line to accomplish the goals outlined in Phase II |
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## B) GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (CONTINUED)

PHASE II	STATUS
1) Institutionalize Project VALOR as an ongoing advisory body	<i>Ongoing</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ conduct community outreach to involve additional parents, students, “dropouts”, teachers, and administrators</li> <li>◆ seek and secure funding to hire a Coordinator for PROJECT Valor</li> <li>◆ carry out the activities as outlined in the <b>Phase II Action Plan</b></li> </ul>	
2) Foster coordination among all entities who are working to improve the educational outcomes in Doña Ana County (DAC)	<i>Ongoing</i>
◆ participate in county-wide coordination meetings	
3) Monitor the progress of the implementation of the recommendations as listed in this report	<i>Ongoing</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ revisit the recommendations in one year</li> <li>◆ continue to collect information about existing programs in DAC</li> <li>◆ examine changes which relate to the recommendations</li> <li>◆ monitor the “dropout” rates for Doña Ana County</li> </ul>	
4) Continue to foster cooperation and problem solving among a diverse group of community members	<i>Ongoing</i>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ encourage full participation from members</li> <li>◆ examine effective strategies from throughout the country</li> <li>◆ continue to create an environment for honest dialogue</li> </ul>	
5) Continue to increase public awareness about the issue through education and information dissemination	<i>Ongoing</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ develop an education and information plan for 1996-1997</li> </ul>	

## C) STATISTICS - HISPANICS AND EDUCATION

### HISPANIC POPULATION INFORMATION

According to the 1990 Census and as illustrated in the charts in APPENDIX D, the percent of the total population which identified as Hispanic in the nation was 9%, while in New Mexico and Doña Ana County it was 38% and 56% respectively. This population has shown a tremendous increase over the last two decades. Hispanics will be the largest minority group in this decade. It is projected that Hispanics will be the largest single ethnic group in several states by the next decade. The percent of the Hispanic population which identified as having a Mexican heritage was 61% in the nation, 57% in New Mexico, and 91% in Doña Ana County.

### INCOME INFORMATION

The per capita income in the United States (U.S) for Hispanics in 1990 was \$8,400, while in New Mexico it was \$7,542 and \$6,056 in Doña Ana County. For whites (non-Hispanic), this figure was \$16,074 for the United States, while in New Mexico and Doña Ana County it was \$15,167, and \$16,074 respectively. Clearly, Anglos generally earn twice as much as Hispanics. In addition, A large gap in the median family income between Hispanics and whites also existed as demonstrated in APPENDIX D. We also know that there is a high degree of correlation between education and income. Higher education attainment levels for

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Hispanics will result in higher income levels.

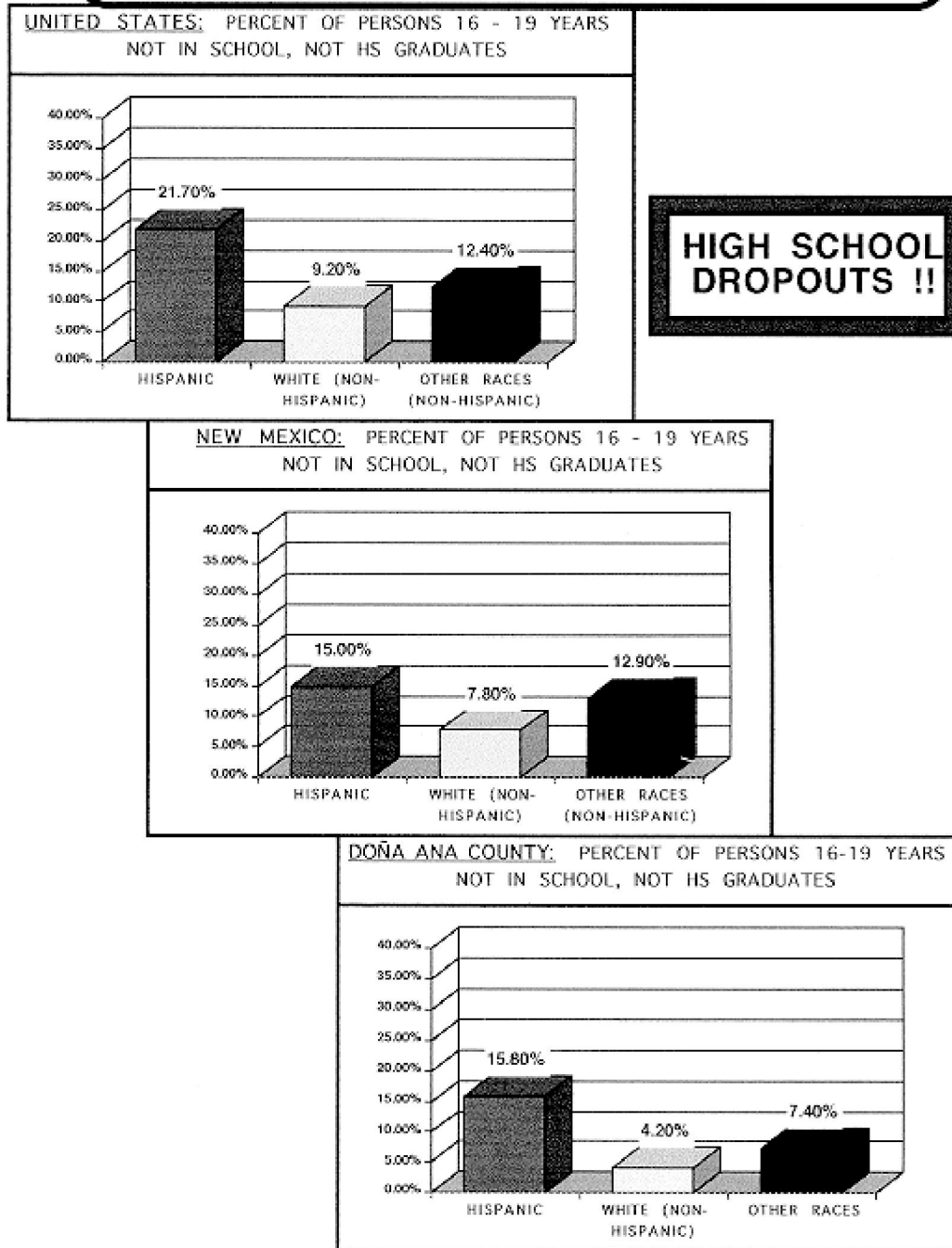
## **OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION**

In 1990, 14.10% of Hispanics held positions in the top occupational category in the U.S. compared to 17.10% in New Mexico and 15.60% in Doña Ana County. The percent of whites who held positions in this category was 28.50% in the nation, 34.30% in New Mexico and, 38.30% in Doña Ana County.

## **“DROPOUT” AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT**

The percentage of Hispanic 16-19 year olds not in school and not high school graduates was 21.70% in the nation, 15% in New Mexico, and 15.80% in Doña Ana County. This compared to 9.20% of the whites in the U.S, 7.80% in New Mexico, and 4.20% in Doña Ana County (please see Figure 1 below). When examining the percent of the population between the ages of 18-24 who had completed high school in 1990, it was 53.60% for Hispanics and 81.60% for whites in the nation, 66.30% for Hispanics and 82.50% for whites in New Mexico, and 69.20% for Hispanics and 92% for whites in Doña Ana County (Figure 2). This gap widens for persons 25 years and older as illustrated in Figure 3. Again, we also know that these figures are seriously undercounted. We have no verified indication that this gap between Anglos and Hispanics is decreasing. Indeed, some data suggests an increase in the gap.

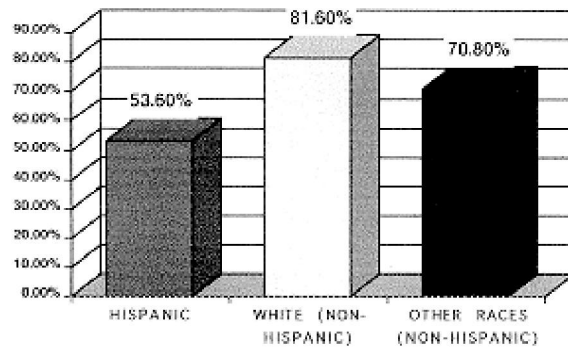
**PERCENTAGE OF 16 - 19 YEAR OLDS  
BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN  
NOT IN SCHOOL AND NOT HS GRADUATES  
(1990 CENSUS DATA)**



**Figure 1**

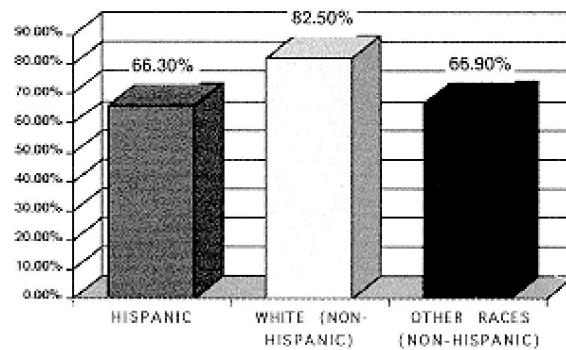
**PERCENTAGE OF 18-24 YEAR OLDS  
BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN  
THAT ARE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**  
(1990 CENSUS DATA)

UNITED STATES: PERCENT OF PERSONS 18-24 YEARS OLD  
THAT ARE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

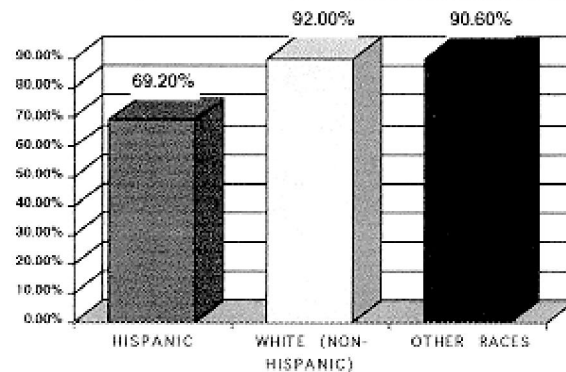


**EDUCATIONAL  
ACHIEVEMENT**

NEW MEXICO: PERCENT OF PERSONS 18-24 YEARS OLD  
THAT ARE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

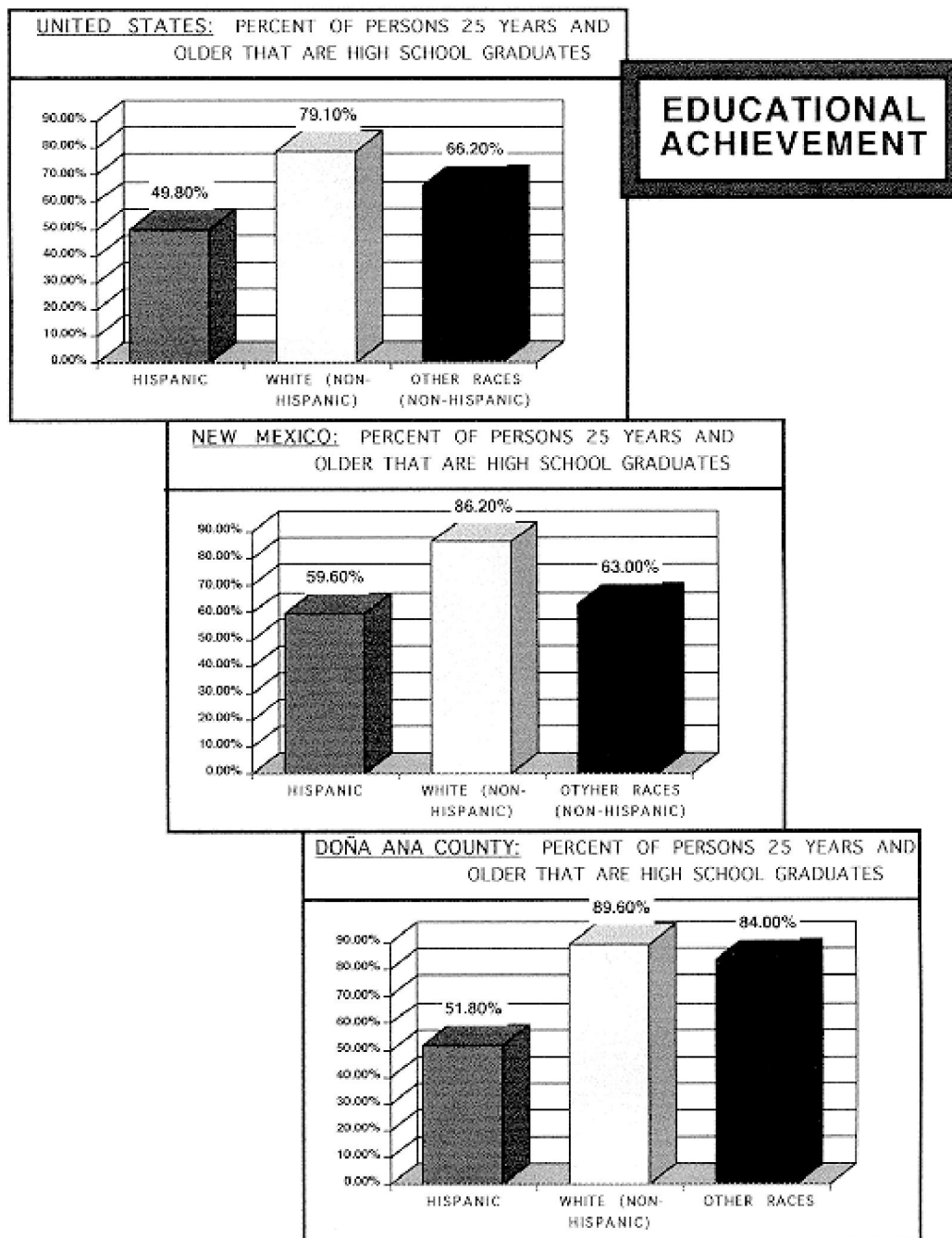


DONA ANA CO. PERCENT OF PERSONS 18-24 YEARS OLD  
THAT ARE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



**Figure 2**

**PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS 25 YEARS AND  
OLDER THAT ARE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES  
BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN  
(1990 CENSUS DATA)**



**Figure 3**

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## D) IMPLICATIONS

The implications of such a high "dropout" rate among Hispanics are alarming and impact everyone in our society. The following is a list of some of these ramifications as taken from the National Hispanic Dropout Project Data Book:

- ▶ Hispanics are, on average, younger and comprise one of the fastest growing segments of the population; as a result, the education and employment of Hispanic young people today will be critical in meeting the needs of senior citizens and the country in the future.
- ▶ The average skill level of the workforce as a whole increased rapidly between 1979 and 1992; almost 50% of the current workforce has completed some college.
- ▶ Persons with lower levels of education were more likely to be unemployed than those with higher levels of education (1994).
- ▶ In 1992, high school "dropouts" were three times more likely to receive income from AFDC or public assistance than high school graduates who did not go on to college (17% vs. 6%).
- ▶ 66% of the prison population did not complete a high school diploma (1994).
- ▶ Increased educational attainment is directly linked to smoking less and exercising more.
- ▶ Only 27% of high school "dropouts" voted in the 1992 presidential election compared to 79% of those with 4 or more years of college who voted.
- ▶ In 1990 students whose parents did not complete high school were more than 7 times more likely than children of college graduates to hold self-expectations of not completing high school.
- ▶ If the average American high school had all its Hispanic students graduating, it would result in over half a million dollars in increased earning potential for each graduating

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class.

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It is important to note that there is evidence at this time that points to a correlation between juvenile crime, poverty, teenage pregnancy, and the issue of "dropping out" of school. Many of these correlations are oversimplified and therefore misinterpreted. These correlations can be misleading and oftentimes stigmatize "dropouts" with other societal problems.

On the other hand, we do know that those youth who do not attain a high school diploma or a GED have a much more difficult time achieving higher incomes and better paying jobs. Often this lack of income can result in substandard housing and poverty.

The most important issue is that all of us should be concerned about and are affected by the failure of our educational system, no

matter what ethnic/racial background, no matter what income, and no matter where we live. The loss of the potential and capabilities of even one student decreases the overall quality of our labor force and the very essence of our creative potential as a society. That loss of human potential in and of itself is of great concern.

The fact that the loss of human potential is increasing or remains at very high levels should be unacceptable to all of us even without further evidence of the possible correlations with juvenile crime, teenage pregnancy, and poverty. The possibility that there may be correlations between "dropping out" of school and these social problems should only increase our concern and actions to address the "dropout" situation.



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## E) ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

Traditionally, the "dropout" issue has often been oversimplified which has resulted in "blaming the victim" (i.e. the student). This point of view focuses on individual responsibility and emphasizes deficits in the home environment and parental weaknesses (Ryan, 1970). Although this is the easiest route to take, it usually does not lead to long lasting solutions.

In order to honor the complexity of the problem and thereby develop long lasting strategies, Project VALOR has examined the issue along several different lines. **The recommendations included in this report focus on institutional and systemic problems which need to be addressed, while not ignoring family involvement issues and student responsibility.** As a result of this approach, community and school based programs, institutional processes, state legislation, and national policies and resources are targeted.

In understanding the "dropout" issue, it is

important to examine the history of the educational system in the U.S., and in particular in the Southwest. Segregated schools existed in southern New Mexico as recently as the 1950's whereby Hispanic students were separated from other students. When desegregation was finally achieved, inequities in the buildings, equipment and teacher qualifications in Hispanic communities remained (Carrasquillo, 1991).

The Hispanic "dropout" situation did not develop overnight. It is a complex issue which requires complex solutions.

Another important historical aspect is the scholarly work which was being generated in the social sciences from the early to the mid 20th century. This "academic" work contributed greatly to a negative and unfounded bias towards Hispanic students (Romano, 1973). The expectations for Hispanic students were lower, the human and capital resources present in the schools were inequitable, the testing methods and tools were biased, and as a result, a

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detrimental cycle was set in motion.

Although the situation for Hispanics has improved since the 1960's, there is still room for more improvement. Beginning with the era of the Earl Warren court, the two largest minority groups in our country (Blacks and Hispanics), rejoiced over landmark victories in the areas of civil rights and equality of opportunity in education, employment, and housing. However we find that today there is more segregation in schools and the disparity in the quality of education between the affluent and the working-class poor neighborhoods is greater than it was at the time of *Brown vs. Board of Education* over 40 years ago (Carrasquillo, 1991).

The commitment on the part of the schools and community is a crucial part of making positive changes.

Additional problems which continue at the institutional level within education include:

- lower expectations by some teachers and educational

administrators for Hispanic students;

- an emphasis on remedial-type programs with less emphasis on preventive and early intervention;
- a shortage of Hispanic role models among all levels of primary, secondary, and post-secondary education;
- a curriculum which does not accurately reflect the contributions of Hispanics to the development of New Mexico and the country.

In addition to these institutional problems which continue, there are larger societal problems which impact the educational process. Many Hispanics of Mexican origin continue to face institutional exploitation such as job ceilings and inequitable pay for equivalent work regardless of education level (Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi, 1986). Expressive exploitation continues also as evidenced by the current backlash against bilingual education. To add to this, poverty, a fragmented social and health service delivery system, and the effects of negative

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mass media are societal aspects which students and families deal with day to day.

Making positive changes in the institutional and systemic arenas is the first step in reducing the Hispanic "dropout" rate in Doña Ana County.

Children rise to the expectations that adults have of them.

The schools recognize the need to address issues of educational attainment and "dropout" and the community response and input has been very positive. This type of commitment is Project VALOR's focal point in accomplishing the objectives and goals as outlined in this report.

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## II. LOCAL PROGRAMS

### A) SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMS

Within the three local school districts in Doña Ana County, Las Cruces, Gadsden, and Hatch, several programs are currently in place which are aimed at preventing “dropout” in either a direct or indirect manner. Listed below are the programs which directly address the “dropout” situation. Please refer to APPENDIX B for a list of the programs which are indirectly related to the “dropout” issue.

The programs in the **Gadsden Independent School District** include:

- Dropout Recovery Learning Centers
- Alternative Middle School Programs
- Santa Teresa High School
- Project GET AHEAD
- Career Programs
- Communities in Schools Program
- Summer Youth Education and Training

#### Program

-La Sexualidad

Most of these programs have limited enrollment and are located in various sites throughout southern DAC. The main “dropout” prevention program in the Gadsden Independent School District is the Dropout Recovery Learning Center.

#### **Dropout Recovery Learning Centers -**

The Panther Achievement Center at Gadsden and the Santa Teresa Achievement Center each serve 58 students currently. Recovered “dropouts” 16 and older engage in a self-paced, contract-based program with direct teacher assistance and parental involvement. Computer-aided instruction is an important component. The contact person is Ben Molina, the Principal at Santa Teresa High School at 505-589-5300.

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The programs in the **Hatch Valley Municipal School District** include:

- Attendance Liaison Program
- Students “At-Risk” Team (SAR)
- GED, In-School Program
- Career Program

The programs in the **Las Cruces Public School District** include:

- Alternative Schools
- San Andres High School
- Career Programs
- Early Childhood/Early Intervention Programs
- School Within-A-School Programs
- New Horizons
- Communities in Schools

Most of these programs also have limited enrollment capacity and are located in several sites, including off-campus buildings. Several programs operate in conjunction with other agencies in the community through shared staff, space, resources, etc. An example of a new school-based program in Las Cruces which integrates community involvement is the

HOSTS Program.

### **Helping One Student to Succeed (HOSTS) -**

The main goal of the HOSTS Program is to prevent students from “dropping out” of school by improving their reading skills. Volunteer tutors and mentors are currently working with 100 6th graders at Sierra Middle School and 40 1st and 2nd graders at Desert Hills Elementary School. The program was implemented in the fall, 1995 and receives funds through Title I. Mid-evaluation results showed growth in 99% of the participants with many of these demonstrating 2 years growth. The contact person at Sierra Middle School is Debbie Rhinehart at 527-9842.

Project Valor will continue to gather information about these programs such as who to contact for each, the source of funding, and the evaluation results. Several recommendations are included below which stress the importance of coordination among these school-based programs. Adequate funding is another important area which is addressed in the

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recommendation section below.

## **B) COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS**

Several community based programs exist in Doña Ana County in addition to the school based programs which are also directly addressing the "dropout" issue. Others also exist which deal with the issue in an indirect way (please refer to APPENDIX C for a list of these). Listed below are the major community based programs in Las Cruces which focus on "dropout" prevention. Recommendations to improve the coordination among these programs are included in the section below.

**Social Services and Tutoring Assisting Youth Program (S.T.A.Y.) - Families & Youth, Inc.** - The main goal of the S.T.A.Y. Program is to prevent students from "dropping out" of school. Program staff and volunteers provide tutoring and social services to students who are temporarily out of school or who are pursuing a GED. The S.T.A.Y. Program

was initiated in 1992 and receives funding from the Children, Youth and Families Department. 55 students are currently being served. Over 75% of the students in the S.T.A.Y. Program return to school, increase their basic skills, and earn academic credit. The contact person is Leonel Briseño at 525-3803.

**Children, Youth and Families Department, Juvenile Probation and Parole Services** - The main goal of this program is to prevent students who are involved with the juvenile justice system from being long term suspended or permanently expelled from school. Program staff, volunteers, and interns have provided tutoring and social services to approximately 200 students since the inception of the program in October, 1995. Preliminary results show that 80-85% of the students involved in the program who returned to school in January have remained in school. For more information please contact Maria Stops at 524-6586.

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## **Communities in Schools -**

The main goal of Communities in Schools

is to keep students in school who have been identified as “at risk” of “dropping out”. A pilot project is currently being implemented and will initially serve students at Sierra Middle School and Gadsden Middle School (12 students at each site will receive comprehensive services). Funding is being provided by the Department of Labor and the National Communities In Schools Program. Evaluation results will not be available until the fall, 1996; however, national evaluations reveal a positive impact.

The **Housing Authority of the City of Las Cruces** (HACLC) initiated pro-active truancy efforts in 1991 which include lease regulations which require children to attend school through the age of 16. Grades and attendance are monitored through a joint initiative with the schools. When needed, early intervention efforts include counseling and tutoring which helps to keep the students in school. The “dropout” rate for children whose families receive housing assistance in Las Cruces has dropped from 29% in 1990 to 13.6% in 1994. The phone number for the HACLC

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is 526-5541.

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### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

#### A) LOCAL

##### *Better education involves community and parent participation...*

- ◆ An **advocacy group** needs to exist for students which is made up of non-school district participants to include students and community leaders.
- ◆ Project Valor needs to remain **separate from the school district and ongoing** ; can provide a direct line of input into each school district's superintendent.
- ◆ **Community based youth programs** such as those mentioned above and in APPENDIX C are essential to a healthy community and in preventing dropout; these programs should:
  - sponsor extracurricular programs which are accessible;
  - explore utilizing schools after school hours;
  - be expanded to serve more students.
- ◆ If a charter school is implemented in Doña Ana County, the **community should make the decisions** regarding the policies, personnel, and procedures which are employed; this decentralized decision making model is sometimes used by the federal government.
- ◆ Parents need to **participate** in schools and provide input in the education of their children.
- ◆ Parents and community members need to recognize the **importance of the schools** in not only education, but also in building community.
- ◆ Parents need to have **high expectations of their children** and help them to be successful in school.
- ◆ The community must hold teachers responsible for **ethical teaching practices** in a diverse learning environment.

##### *Making changes in relationship to funding offers opportunities...*

- ◆ Funding needs to be secured from private and/or public sources for **community/school partnerships** to include all levels of education.
- ◆ Social service programs such as **Project Forward may be able to assist** the schools by placing participants into the schools.
- ◆ Funding needs to be increased for **coordination** of school and community based programs.
- ◆ Funding needs to be increased for **alternative programs which provide direct services**.

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## A) LOCAL (CONTINUED)

*Policies, training, and procedures within the primary and secondary schools should be avenues for positive change...*

- ◆ The **attendance policy** needs to be modified to consist of a **comprehensive intervention** strategy to keep non-violent kids in school.
- ◆ Schools need to continue to **link with Community Policing Programs** thereby fostering a sense of community in and outside of the school setting.
- ◆ The **tool and process for determining who is "dropping out"** and why needs to be improved; a cohort study needs to be conducted in each district over a minimum of a 4 year period.
- ◆ A **method and system for collecting and disseminating education related data** is needed among the schools and community agencies.
- ◆ The funding for **intramural programs needs to be maximized** to serve more kids, including band and extracurricular funds.
- ◆ **Scholarship and grant information** should be provided in an easy to access format to the parents of all students at regular intervals beginning with the 7th grade.
- ◆ Administrators and teachers at all schools need to **promote active parental participation**; instituting a Parent Outreach Program (POP) is one way.
- ◆ The **role of the community needs to be expanded** to include providing input in the selection process of educational staff and administrators.
- ◆ **Multicultural teacher education needs to be integrated** into the continuing education process.
- ◆ Districts need to become **more flexible with teaching schedules** and provide incentives for teachers to modify their schedules.
- ◆ Incentives need to be incorporated into all certified **bilingual teachers' packages**.
- ◆ Administrators and supervisors need to receive up-to-date training on how to **evaluate teacher effectiveness in a multicultural setting**.
- ◆ Teachers need to be **assessed on academic ability as well as ethical behavior**; this could be incorporated into the interviewing process.
- ◆ The various "dropout" prevention and intervention **programs need to agree to coordinate their services**.
- ◆ Just as the National Dropout Project advocates for demonstrated efficacy, Project VALOR also encourages local programs to incorporate **self-evaluation into all efforts**.
- ◆ **The Youth Tutoring Youth and HOSTS programs need to be expanded** to include "at risk" older students tutoring "at risk" younger students; perhaps credit can be provided as an incentive.

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- ◆ A 3 year pilot study needs to be conducted to **evaluate the impact of student uniforms** on improved education (beginning in elementary).
  - ◆ The **professional dress of teachers** needs to be explored.

## A) LOCAL (CONTINUED)

### *Teaching and contextually rich curricula at the primary and secondary levels set the foundation for life long learning...*

- ◆ Teachers need to be provided **rewards for innovative work**.
- ◆ Teachers need to consistently hold **high expectations for all children** and utilize an assets approach (each student's positive qualities are recognized and nurtured).
- ◆ **Curricula modifications need to be made** to include the following:
  - specific **regional history** throughout the U.S. given the region, (southwest history in New Mexico which acknowledges the many contributions of Mexican Americans/Hispanics)
  - multicultural studies** K-12 to include issues of gender, race/ethnicity, class, language, social justice, etc.
  - an elective course offered** in all middle and high schools which incorporates textbook such as Mexican American Heritage by Carlos Jimenez or Mexican American Literature, edited by Charles Tatum.
- ◆ Teachers need to be encouraged to **emphasize instruction**, resulting in fewer disciplinary problems; when students are engaged in learning they are usually not creating problems.
- ◆ **Teacher effectiveness locally** needs to be studied; a teacher profile needs to be developed which documents successful practices with Hispanics.
- ◆ The **team approach and cooperative learning models** need to be utilized more often.

### *Multicultural teacher education and composition at the post-secondary level is another critical area to address...*

- ◆ **Ethnic role models need to be increased** in all levels of school personnel where under-representation exists. A large gap still exists in DAC.
- ◆ More **bilingual counselors** are needed in all levels of education, especially at the elementary level.
- ◆ **Multicultural teacher education constructs and conceptualizations need** to become part of the National Teachers Examination.
- ◆ Accredited **cross cultural training** needs to be incorporated into educational programs.
- ◆ **Continuing education requirements** need to include certified multicultural sensitivity training, evaluation at the administrative level, and the ethics of teaching.
- ◆ The **admissions and screening requirements** need to be broadened to include interpersonal communication skills, teacher attitudes, and knowledge of social justice and equity issues.

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- ◆ A “**Code of Professional Ethics**” needs to be incorporated into the education program as it already exists in the criminal justice and social work professions.
  - ◆ Post-secondary educational programs need to be held accountable in the **standards and monitoring** of teacher field placements in the schools and in other community agencies.
  - ◆ **College recruitment strategies** need to be designed which reach physically into under- represented communities.

## B) STATE

*Policies and procedures at the state level impact all levels within the educational system...*

- ◆ **Systematic and consistent data collection** is needed at the state level.
- ◆ The state **guidelines which govern the suspension and termination process** need to be improved; this includes ensuring a due process, an appeal process, and involving non-school district participants on the review boards.
- ◆ The state guidelines need to mandate **training for administrators in evaluating teacher effectiveness**.
- ◆ Legislation and judicial enforcement in regards to **truancy issues** need to be examined.
- ◆ **Certification for teachers** need to be provided to include:
  - representation of major stakeholders** such as colleges, universities, school district personnel, etc.;
  - community board certification** to supplement existing structure (example - DARE model).

*Funding strategies need to adapt as the environment changes...*

- ◆ A percentage of the educational **budget needs to be redirected** to an RFP (request for proposal) process where only teachers and parents can apply under the direction of local community based advisory groups; this could be based on merit.
- ◆ Base funding for education in New Mexico needs to be **increased** through innovative sources to include expansion for alternative education.
- ◆ Funding for **valued youth** (students who are currently being coined as "at risk" for dropping out) needs to be increased.
- ◆ The **funding formula** needs to be reviewed and revised.
- ◆ The level of funding for **teacher education programs** needs to be reviewed.

## C) NATIONAL

*Funding and advocacy at the national level influences success at the local level...*

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- ◆ The national education budget needs to be **increased**.
  - ◆ An **assessment and evaluation of learning** needs to be explored because of the importance placed on test scores.
  - ◆ Additional **partnerships between public and private entities** need to be developed.
  - ◆ **Data collection, analysis, and disbursement methods** need to be improved.
  - ◆ **Multicultural teacher training** needs to become part of the National Teachers Examination.

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## IV. ACTION PLAN

ACTION	TARGET DATE
<b>A) Project VALOR acting as a task force will begin the process of developing specific action plans for current objectives and those articulated during community meetings</b> a) develop ongoing goals and objectives, team processes, group membership, format of committees b) develop a flyer and brochure c) secure funds for Project VALOR through public and private sources and fundraisers	<b>June, 1996</b>  <b>August through September</b>
<b>B) Public awareness and information dissemination</b> a) publicity b) community presentations and input c) presentations to PTOs, agencies, service clubs, Hispanic Chamber, education clubs, student organizations, local government officials, school officials d) National Hispanic Task Force when in Las Cruces	<b>ongoing September, 1996</b>  <b>August, 1996</b>

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## V. CONCLUSION

The potential of millions of our students is currently not being realized through our educational system. It is clear that a higher percentage of Hispanics do not have the same educational attainment levels of Anglos and thereby have fewer opportunities for success. It is also evident that this disparity is at best remaining the same and much more likely becoming greater. Depending on your perspective, our Hispanic youth are either pushed out or “dropout” of school at early ages.

There are several perspectives which can be taken in understanding the relationship of “dropouts” to societal processes. First, we can “blame the victim”. “Blaming the victim” means we see the issue of low educational attainment by various groups and “dropping out” as choices and problems of values, family, and individual responsibility. From this perspective, dropouts “choose” to dropout - sometimes due to lack of parental involvement, low value of education, and lack of individual responsibility. The focus of this

perspective is on the affected individual and their families.

Another approach is to understand the issue of “dropping out” as a systemic process which involves the relationship of the economic system to the changing roles of families, international relationships between Mexico and the United States, and institutions such as education. From this perspective, these dynamic relationships do not adequately provide for the new cultural mix of our society.

A final approach focuses primarily on educational institutions and the need for new forms of training, instruction, administration, and educational processes to provide for the education of Hispanics. Educational institutions are simply not addressing the needs of Hispanics and other minority groups. Often this means that there are disjointed, uncoordinated, underfunded, and programatically tenuous efforts to address the issues of Hispanic “dropouts” and lower educational

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attainment levels. In some cases there is benign neglect. The point of this perspective is not focused on the intent of those involved in the educational system, but on the need to increase and enhance our activities and also to restructure our educational system and the funds we expend on education.

We have attempted to integrate all of these perspectives into our recommendations for action as we believe that this is a total issue requiring many approaches. We believe that we must have serious continuing and new efforts in addressing the needs of families and children as well as the educational system. To focus just on the children themselves or the families to which they belong or the communities in which the families reside is insufficient. We must realize the interrelationships of individuals and institutions to systemic processes as

well as the state and the economy.

The issue of Hispanic “dropouts” is a national crisis which affects everyone, not just Hispanics. As our society fails to realize the potential of these students, we decrease the overall quality of our workforce and our productivity.

Ultimately, the strength of our nation is based on the quality of our workforce and our creative development. We simply cannot afford to lose the potential contributions of a growing segment of our population.

This is truly a public and private responsibility which requires cooperative action. It is really not necessary to fix blame but to embrace our future and move on. It truly takes a village to provide education for our children and therefore it takes all of us working together.



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**APPENDIX A**

**Project VALOR Membership**

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## Co-Chairs

**Fred Rubio**, 33 years - police force, Captain of Criminal Investigations Division, Co-President of Mesilla Valley Youth Foundation, Chair of Communities in Schools, Board member of Hispano Chamber of Commerce

**Michelle Valverde**, Instructor in Sociology at NMSU, Coordinator for Las Cruces Communities in Schools Program

## Current active members of Project Valor are:

**Vickie Aguilar**, 15 year federal employee, member of IMAGE de Las Cruces

**Roman Aranda IV**, student, National Hispanic Institute, Las Cruces High School

**Cristina Barrera**, student, National Hispanic Institute, Las Cruces High School

**Leonel Briseño**, S.T.A.Y. Program Coordinator, Families and Youth, Inc.

**Dr. Rudolfo Chávez Chávez**, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, NMSU

**Dr. Robert Gallegos**, Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, NMSU

**Rosalie Gallegos**, Valued Youth/Safe Schools Program Coordinator, Las Cruces Public Schools

**Mary Helen Garcia**, Director of Migrant and Multicultural Education, Las Cruces Public Schools

**Liz Gutierrez**, parent and community member

**Marielena Gutierrez**, student, National Hispanic Institute, Las Cruces High School

**Rosemary E. Kirby**, teacher, Las Cruces Public Schools

**Mike McCamley**, U.S. Army retired

**Tina Padilla King**, Children, Youth and Families and State Communities in Schools Director

**Juan Sanchez**, Director of Bilingual Education, Gadsden Independent School District

**Lewis Spencer**, retired teacher, 13 years at the high school level and 20 as University Professor

**Michelle Rentería**, Chicano Student Programs, NMSU and member, IMAGE de Las Cruces

**Dr. Raymond Sandoval**, Director, Hispanic Leadership Program and Managing Partner of Quantos Consulting

Staff support is provided by **Sal Ceballos** from Senator Bingaman's office.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Auxiliary Dropout Prevention Programs in the Schools - 1995/96**

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## **GADSDEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

1. Title I
2. Title I - Migrant
3. Title VI
4. Emergency Immigrant Program
5. Pre-school Summer Program
6. Bilingual Education
7. Special Education

## **HATCH VALLEY MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS**

1. SPLA-Spanish Language Arts for everyone
2. Migrant-Federal Home-School Liaison
3. Hispanic-USDA/NMSU Mentorship Program
4. Drug-Free Coordinator
5. Guidance and Counseling
6. Bilingual Education
7. Work-Study Program

## **LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

1. Newcomers Program
2. Youth Tutoring Youth
3. Evening School
4. Bilingual/Multicultural Program
5. College Bound
6. Homeless - Project Link
7. MESA, stresses math, engineering, science, and related fields
8. Parent Program
9. Safe Schools Program

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10. Special Education
  11. Substance Abuse Program
  12. Technology
  13. Summer School
  14. Title I
  15. Wellness Centers

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## **APPENDIX C**

### **Inventory of Additional Community Based Programs**

AGENCY NAME	DESCRIPTION	SERVICE AREA
<u>Big Brothers /Big Sisters</u> <b>Contact:</b> Bruce Wechsler	Adults volunteer, provide fun and enriching relationships with children.	Las Cruces <b>Phone:</b> 523-4514
<u>City of Las Cruces, SER Project</u> <b>Contact:</b> Terry Garcia	Administers youth work experience for in-school students.	Las Cruces <b>Phone:</b> 524-1946
<u>Hispanic Youth Leadership Program</u> <b>Contact:</b> Raymond Sandoval	A wide variety of activities provided to develop leadership skills.	Las Cruces <b>Phone:</b> 521-4564
<u>Image de Las Cruces</u> <b>Contact:</b> Vickie Aguilar	Leadership building in Hispanic Youth	Las Cruces and surrounding area <b>Phone:</b> 524-3889
<u>La Clinica de Familia, Adolescent Family Life</u> <b>Contact:</b> Nancy Tafoya	A wide variety of services are provided to parenting teens and their families.	Las Cruces and southern Doña Ana County <b>Phone:</b> 523-2042
<u>Mayor's Youth Advisory Board</u> <b>Contact:</b> Marielena Gutierrez	Selected youth participate in local government and meet with the Mayor monthly.	Las Cruces <b>Phone:</b> 526-3027
<u>Mesilla Valley Youth Foundation</u> <b>Contact:</b> Irene Oliver-Lewis	Court Youth Center will offer art, cultural, educational, and sport activities.	Las Cruces <b>Phone:</b> 523-9634
<u>Southern NM Human Development-People Against Drugs (PAD)</u> <b>Contact:</b> Abel Chavarria	A variety of activities are provided which support healthy life style choices.	Southern Doña Ana County <b>Phone:</b> 882-5101

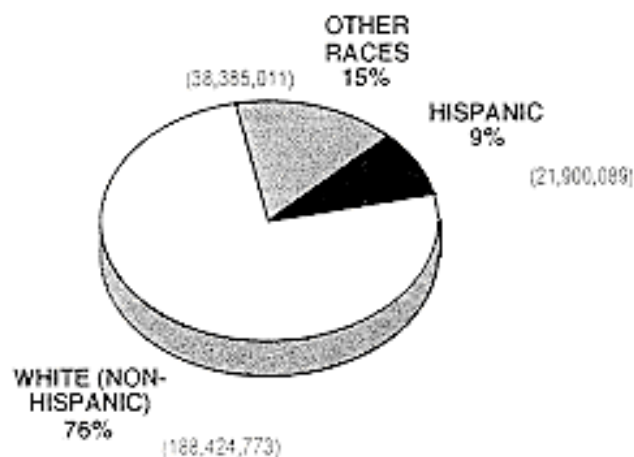


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## **APPENDIX D**

### **Dropout Data**

# US POPULATION (BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN) [1990 Census Data]

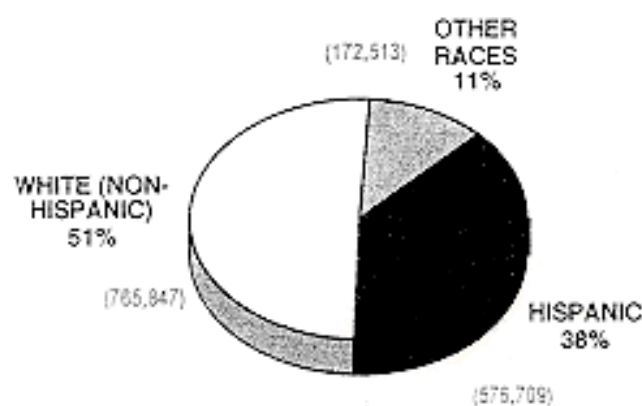


## POPULATION DATA

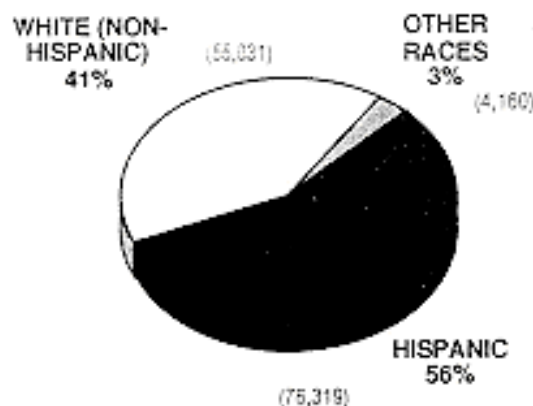
BY RACE AND HISPANIC  
ORIGIN - (1990 CENSUS)

UNITED STATES  
NEW MEXICO  
DOÑA ANA COUNTY

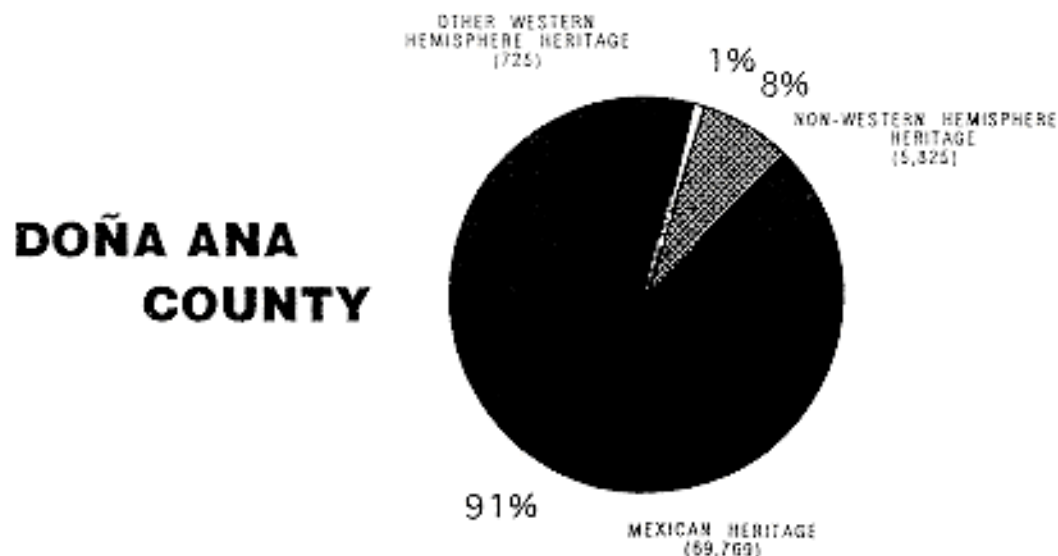
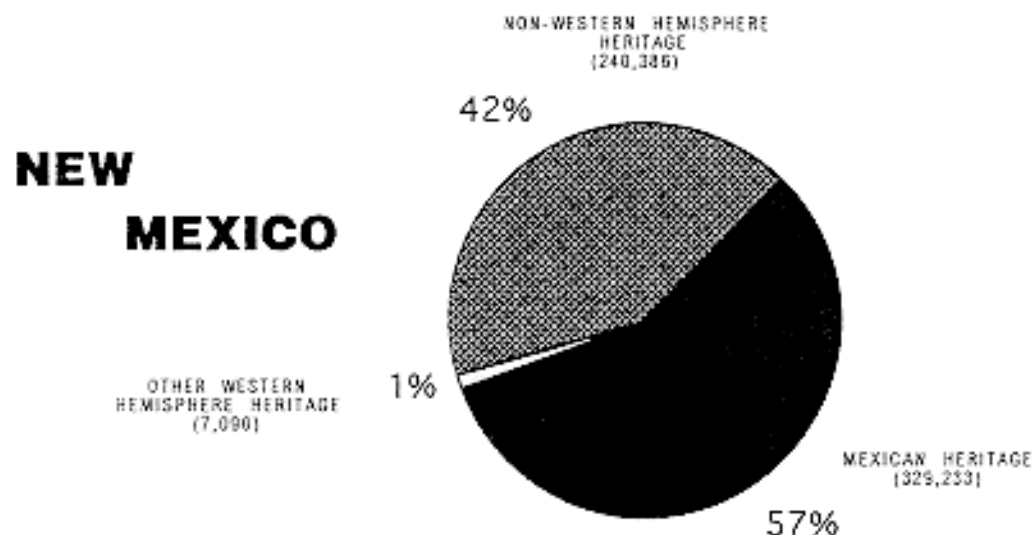
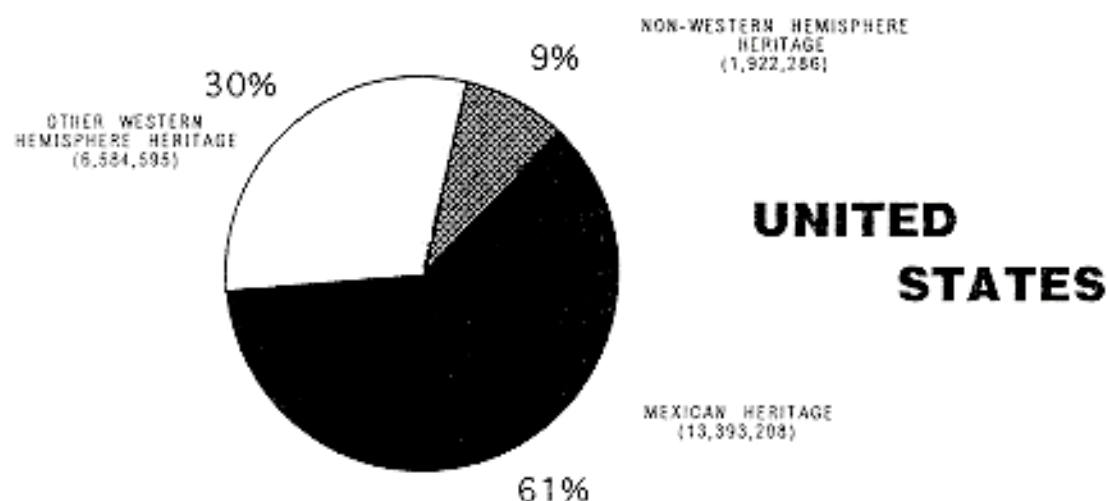
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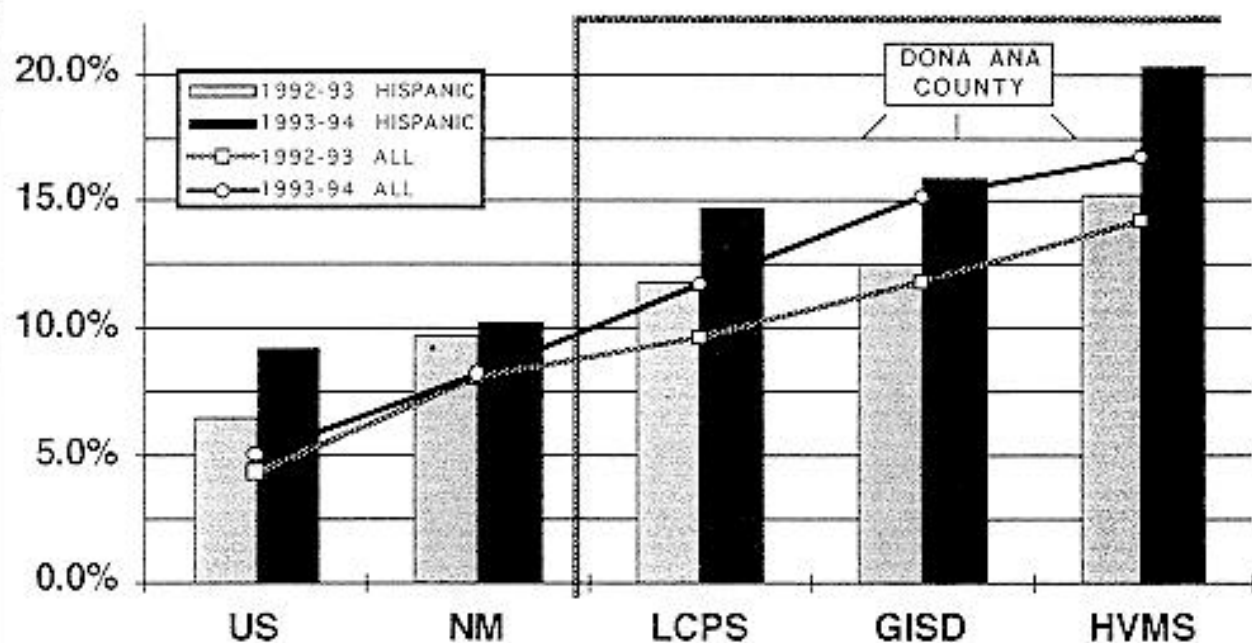
# DAC POPULATION (BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN) [1990 Census Data]



# HISPANIC POPULATION BY HERITAGE / ORIGIN CATEGORIES (1990 CENSUS DATA)



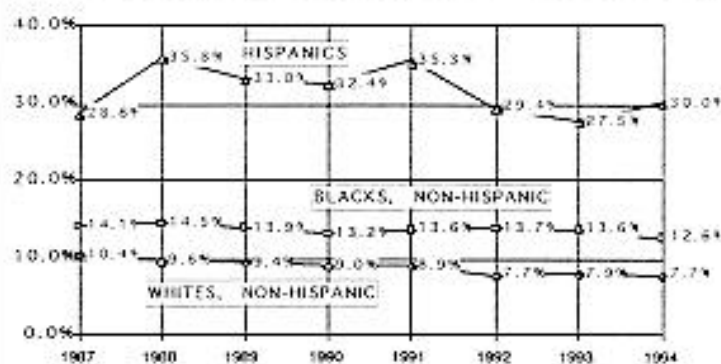
# HIGH SCHOOL EVENT<sup>1</sup> DROPOUT RATES: 92-93 & 93-94 (US - NM- DOÑA ANA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS)<sup>2</sup>



HIGH SCHOOL EVENT DROPOUT RATES (ALL AND HISPANIC)	US United States	NM New Mexico	LCPS Las Cruces Pub Schools	GISD Gadsden Ind School Dist	HVMS Hatch Valley Mun Schools
92-93 (ALL STUDENTS)	4.3%	8.0%	9.6%	11.8%	14.2%
93-94 (ALL STUDENTS)	5.0%	8.2%	11.7%	15.1%	16.7%
92-93 (HISPANICS)	6.5%	9.7%	11.8%	12.5%	15.2%
93-94 (HISPANICS)	9.2%	10.2%	14.7%	15.9%	20.3%

## HIGH SCHOOL STATUS DROPOUTS<sup>3</sup> IN THE UNITED STATES (Ages 16-24; 1987-1994)

SOURCE: US Dept of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, Unpublished tabulations and US Dept of Education (May 1995)



### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Event Rates measure the proportion of students who drop out of High School in a single year. These students may return to High School or may complete High School requirements by completion of alternative programs such as General Educational Development (GED).

<sup>2</sup> New Mexico data was extracted from School District and New Mexico State Department of Education reports and information. United States information was taken from the Bureau of the Census 1993 and 1994 Continuing Population Survey (Household Survey).

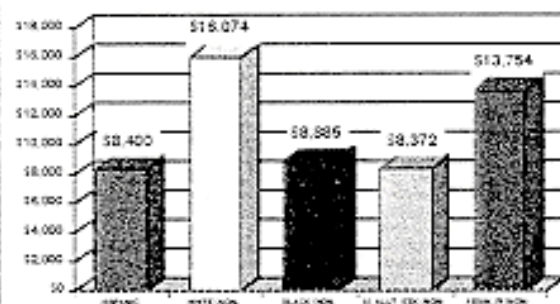
<sup>3</sup> Status Dropout Rates indicate the proportion of the general population within an age range (typically 16 through 24) and not in school) who have not completed High School by graduation or by alternate means. Students that dropout of High School and do not complete High School by alternate means become Status Dropouts.

# PER CAPITA AND MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN

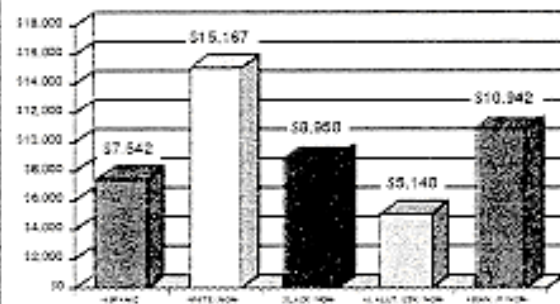
UNITED STATES, NEW MEXICO & DOÑA ANA COUNTY (1990 CENSUS DATA)

## PER CAPITA INCOME

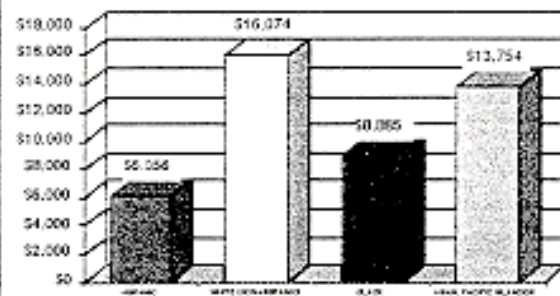
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### NEW MEXICO

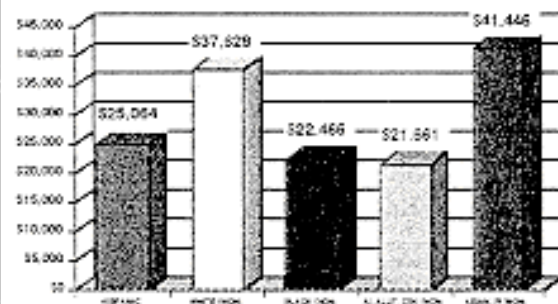


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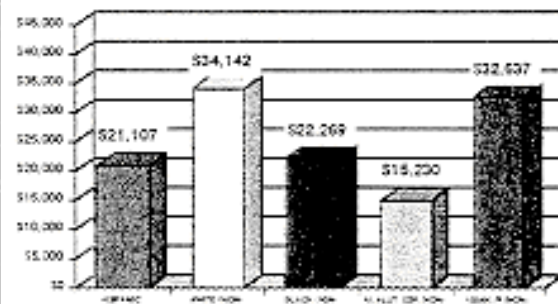


## MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME

### UNITED STATES



### NEW MEXICO



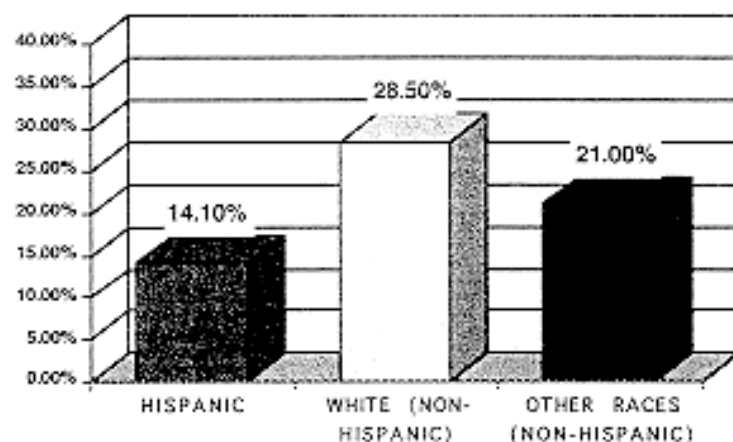
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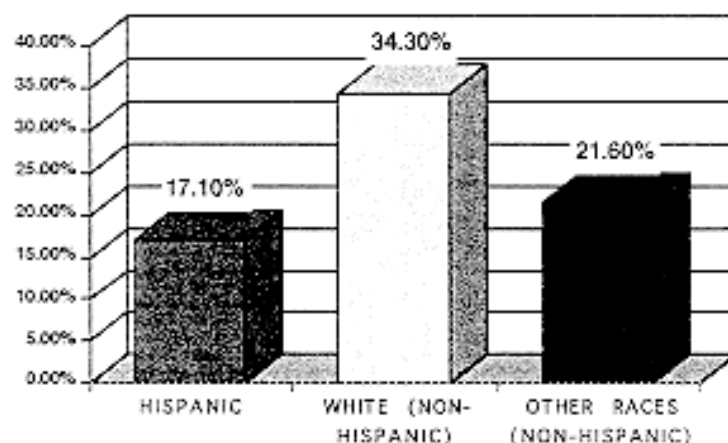
# TOP OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY - ( UNITED STATES, NEW MEXICO AND DOÑA ANA COUNTY).

PERCENT OF EMPLOYED PERSONS 16 YEARS AND OVER WHO INDICATE EMPLOYMENT IN THE TOP OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY; MANAGERIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SPECIALTY OCCUPATIONS. BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN. (1990 CENSUS DATA).

## UNITED STATES



## NEW MEXICO



## DOÑA ANA COUNTY

